

Seattle City Council

Neighborhoods, Arts, & Civil Rights Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2 PM, October 14, 2003

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Christopher J. Jarmick**

Today's Words' Worth poet is **Dennis Caswell**

Dennis Caswell lives in Woodinville and is employed on the east side in the aerospace industry. He received degrees in computer science from the University of California and UCLA and has been reading poetry in and around Seattle for the past four years.

Formations

Lewis and Clark Caverns, Montana

By Dennis Caswell

I first saw formations like these in amusement park rides,
tarted up with impossible colors, the way Bible stories
prettify wisdom. But here they are in the original:
a dripping womb of earthly knowledge. Our guide
makes it clear that these geologic viscera are only
accretions of physical processes, that calcite crystals
are chemistry's termites, and these mounds of lime are simply
what happens when there are enough of them, so the beauty we see
is in us, and not in the seeming passion for theme and
variation in the coloratura stalactites rippling
across the rock roof, filling each gap with an ornament,
or the basso profundo stalagmites that surge up in sforzando
counterpoint, their surfaces bulging wetly with arrested
motion, like a mind that hangs in mid-thought: a mind
for which these structures are fluid as splashes--though for us
they are frozen mid-leap in the strobe-light flash of our lives--
a mind that consists in these atoms: in forces that bind
and repel, in the balance of solution and precipitate, a mind
in which thought and creation are prettified words for time.

-- END --